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PAROLE LAW IN MAINE

Parole Law at Maine State Prison.—"The parole law, now in execution, is a factor of distinct significance and has introduced a recognized reformatory sentiment," say the members of the board of prison and jail inspectors of Maine, Hon. Frank H. Hargraves of West Buxton, Matthew C. Morrill of Gray and Charles B. Randall of Bowdoinham, who have recently made their report.

Continuing further about the law permitting the parole of convicts in the state's prison, the inspectors say:

"To those who really want to become useful citizens the parole is an incentive for control and improvement, that they may merit its bestowal. To the recipient it carries the recommendation that he has proved himself worthy of confidence, which, and it needs no stating, is a foundation for a return to civil life.

"It is recognized that there are those who though convicted of a serious misdemeanor or crime, are not at heart criminals and would be glad at the expiration of their sentence to join the ranks of wage-earning and law-abiding citizens; but sent out, as they are, with the handicap of a prison record, and practically no money, and in the most of cases with no one to do them a good turn, the situation at once becomes serious. To those who want to 'make good' in their new start in life information and assistance at this stage would be of the greatest value and worthy of the state's interest. Without some help they may not be able to withstand the way of the least resistance and find themselves again under the ban of the law."

There are at present 178 male and eight female inmates of the state's prison; 74 were received during the year; 54 were discharged by expiration of their sentences; eight were pardoned by the governor and council; 32 were pardoned by the governor and parole committee; one parole violator was returned; one person receiving a conditional pardon was returned; four were transferred to the criminal insane hospital; and one was received from the criminal insane hospital."

Continuing the report says:

"It is the observation of your board of inspectors that conditions relating to the prisoners—their health, food, clothing and discipline—may be stated as excellent. Their housing and sanitation, while not what they should be, are made as good as circumstances will permit. The ventilation of the corridors is good and the heating comfortable. The men from their appearance and the ease with which they continue at their daily work, we judge to be of good physical standard; and the influence of the institution upon their mental and moral attitude must tend to make them better citizens when their opportunity comes.

"Under the experienced heads of the departments a good proportion of the men become interested and competent workmen, and it is a subject of surprise and complimentary to the overseers and the men, that with the changing population the quality and character of the work can be maintained.

"During the summer months the men are given the yard Saturday afternoons for out of door sports. This is greatly appreciated. The freedom from restraint and monotony of prison discipline, the healthy out of door excitement from competing sports and rival ball teams, the liberty to talk and laugh and shout, drives the pallor from their faces and makes them forget for the time the existence of a prison wall. The sentiment seems to be for an extension

RECOMMENDATION OF PRISON COMMISSIONERS

of recreation, and valuables, if any, are taken to the early date by the warden and the inspectors.

"The men are well supplied with comfortable clothing. A regulation prison suit is worn which is not, however, the conspicuous striped suit commonly worn in a large number of prisons, but a suit, one-half of which is brown and the other half black. On coming to the prison the clothes of the prisoners are changed, the outer clothing aired and if necessary thoroughly fumigated, his underclothing washed and all put away with his number and name attached. Money and valuables, if any, are taken to the office and placed in safe keeping for the day of his release, if any there be. The prisoner is given a thorough bath and then provided with underwear, stockings, shoes and a suit of prison clothes. Once each week the men go in squads of five to the commissary department, baths are taken and a suit of clean underclothing, with stockings, towels, sheets and pillowcases are given to each."—From the *Daily Commercial*, Bangor, Me., Feb. 11, 1914.

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Recommendations of the Massachusetts Prison Commissioners.—(Jan. 1, 1914)—*Boards of Parole and Advisory Board of Pardons.*—A law was passed (chapter 829, Acts of 1913) providing for an advisory board of pardons, two boards of parole—one for the inmates of the Reformatory for Women and one for the inmates of the State Prison and Massachusetts Reformatory—and a deputy commissioner to take charge of the work of the parole agents and to perform other duties.

Under the provisions of this act the Advisory Board of Pardons and the two Boards of Parole were organized, and since July, 1913, have held frequent sessions and discharged a considerable amount of work. The sessions were held at the various institutions, and the applicants appeared in person before the respective Boards and were fully heard in their own behalf.

All persons paroled go to proper employment, and are supervised in a kindly and helpful way. * * * * *

Research Work at Institutions. A diligent effort has been made to inaugurate the practice of promptly and continuously collecting all information relevant to the character, capabilities and condition (mental and physical) of all prisoners committed to the institutions, so that their treatment and training may be wisely ordered while they are in detention, and that their liberty may be granted them at the time and under the conditions most likely to serve their own ultimate good.

Some progress has been made in the direction indicated, but much remains to be accomplished, particularly in some of the institutions where the population is considerable, and in which there were no officials prepared for the new service by experience or training. * * * * *

State Control of County Prisons. With such provision, but not otherwise, the management of the county prisons could, with the allowance of a reasonable length of time for preparation, be safely confided to the Board of Prison Commissioners, but we feel that such action should not be taken without providing that the tenure of office as masters of the houses of correction should be safeguarded to the present sheriffs, as long as they may continue in their offices as sheriffs; that they may appoint and remove their subordinates as at